

6 November 1959

Chief, Current Support Staff, CRR
Thru : Acting Chief, Industrial Division, CRR

Chief, Military Economics Branch, D/I

Your Request of 5 November 1959

1. By what means, and how soon, could or would we become aware of the cessation of production of tanks and gun tubes in the USSR? Consider inspection and no inspection.

2. Given the nature of the items and the means of producing them, there seems to be no foolproof way of ascertaining a termination of production (or the beginning, or an increase) if a determined effort is made to prevent it. Experience to date indicates that information pertaining to the production of ground equipment is, in general, more difficult to obtain and develop than is the case for other types of hardware. Historically, cessation of production of a given model of tank has usually been observed only after a considerable time lag.

3. Aerial inspection could determine whether facilities are capable of tank production but whether production ceased or not would undoubtedly be more complicated. Presumably, the possibility of underground plants would make such determination more difficult--at least with regard to time. Ground inspection, complementing aerial inspection, should improve the likelihood, but even so absolute certainty seems remote. Gun tubes appear an almost impossible task in this regard.

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